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ABSTRACT

This booklet is intended to be a package that individual teachers and local associations can use in writing successful proposals. It begins with 10 steps that can serve as a guide for formulating a proposal. These steps can be used as agenda topics for working through the proposal process. The next section of this booklet details how to write the proposal. It contains the various parts of the proposal listed in outline with explanations and examples. The third section presents criteria for rating the proposal. The fourth section, concerning evaluation and reporting states that evaluation and reporting of a proposal that is already being implemented is essential when looking for future funding. A chart showing the major activities that comprise the funding cycle makes up the fifth section. The final section of this booklet contains various sources of financial support for funding proposals. (RC)

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Preparing Educational Proposals

A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

by Herbert T. Tilley

A National Education Association Publication

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INTRODUCTION

Proposals are an important basis for the decisions that are made by educational funding organizations—both federal and private. During the past 10 years, the kinds and levels of funds available for educational purposes have become quite complex. Unfortunately, there is little available information on the preparation and completion of proposals that would help teachers and local associations successfully compete for funding. What follows is not intended to be a comprehensive document but rather a package that individual teachers and local associations could use in writing successful proposals.

This booklet includes:

1. Steps for formulating a proposal
2. An outline for writing a proposal
3. Criteria for rating a proposal
4. Suggestions to keep in mind when preparing proposals
5. Sources of financial support.

The 10 steps in the chapter on the preparation of an educational proposal—"Formulating the Proposal"—were culled from requests that teachers made to various national and state organizations. Teachers are increasingly articulate about gaps in knowledge and practice, and are seeking expanded resources to close these gaps. A survey conducted in one state revealed that there is a 40 percent increase of teachers applying for grants. The kinds of requests that teachers make for funds usually relate to the student in the classroom and to the quality of instruction that is or is not being provided.

Some states include in their certification regulations opportunities for teachers to plan through their local associations those learning opportunities which best meet learning and professional growth needs. Such certification procedures permit teachers to regulate and develop in the profession, and these procedures help provide leadership for improving cur-

riculum and instruction in local school districts. In this way teachers have become an integral part of the curriculum decision-making process in some areas of the nation. Local associations can help by developing proposals that will lead to solutions to educational problems.

Local teacher associations have a continuing role as problem-solvers. Educational proposals that succeed in obtaining additional human and financial resources offer one way to solve local educational problems, but competition for funds is acute. To ensure success, association members should examine their own expectations before drafting an educational proposal, and they should have confidence in what they are doing. The purpose of this booklet is to help teachers prepare, write, and implement educational proposals.

FORMULATING THE PROPOSAL

The following 10 steps are intended to serve as a guide for formulating the proposal. These steps might be thought of as agenda topics for working through the proposal process. Since many proposals must be submitted by a certain date, these steps could have dates assigned to them and serve as a statement of the scope of work for the local association.

Steps

1. *Identify the ideal conditions desired.*

   The use of brainstorming, needs-assessment, and group discussions can develop the general area to be included in the proposal.

2. *Describe the actual conditions as they relate to each of the ideal conditions.*

   Completing statements of existing situations for each of the ideal statements will provide a basis for identifying problem areas.

3. *List and explain the discrepencies between the ideal and the real.*

   Brief statements are developed that identify the differences that exist between the ideal and the real. These statements are used to develop specific objectives for the proposal.

4. *Identify objectives that will resolve the discrepencies.*

   Each objective is written in concise, specific statements. The objectives as written provide the basis for resolving the identified problems. The objectives are placed in order of importance.

5. *Complete the activities to achieve fully each objective, and describe generally the resources needed to solve the problem.*

The activities and resources needed are stated in general terms and placed in paragraph form. A detailed plan of all of the activities should be outlined with a schedule of dates for completion of the activities.

6. *Complete a detailed budget of funds needed to complete each objective as well as each of the activities.*

   It is essential that sufficient detail be included in each budget so that each objective and activity will have adequate financial resources. Each budget item needs to be checked with the guidelines and regulations from the funding source.

7. *Identify the experience, background, and responsibilities of the personnel included in the proposal.*

   As the proposal is planned, the duties and responsibilities of all personnel need to be carefully considered. The capability of the local association to implement the proposal successfully also needs to be analyzed.

8. *Complete an evaluation plan of the project.*

   Describe the processes and procedures, including any instrument you might select, that will be used to determine the extent of completion of the objectives of the project. Determine if there is other information that needs to be included in the evaluation plan. The evaluation plan needs to provide for the essential information that will be available for preparing and reporting project progress and success.

9. *Complete dissemination plans.*

   Develop the means for reporting results and progress to the various groups in the educational community.

10. *Complete an impact statement.*

    Describe in detail what will be the anticipated results from the project when it is successfully implemented. Also describe in detail what will result if the project cannot be implemented for lack of funding.

WRITING THE PROPOSAL

Even though there are several different funding sources identified later in this booklet, all of the sources follow a basically similar outline. It is most important, however, to obtain the guidelines and regulations of the funding source before the final draft of the proposal is written.

The following parts of the proposal are listed in the outline below with explanations and examples. (The examples provided are isolated and come from different proposals; put together they would not constitute a complete proposal.)

I. Statement of the problem.

Clear, concise statements of the problem are made. They provide the basis for determining project objectives. The problem statements should contain factual evidence that can become the basis for the proposal.

For example:

A. Teachers have from three to five days yearly for instructional improvement and professional development. Increasing amounts of time during summer months need to be provided for teachers to complete planning, skills, and technique improvement.

B. Students in an elementary school are consistently two years below national norms in reading and mathematics as determined from a five-year analysis of achievement records.

C. Many learning resources for students exist in local towns and cities. Few opportunities exist for the community resources to become an integral part of the school program.

II. Reporting of related research and support data.

The proposal will need to explain the local, state, and national research results that support or further define the nature and relevance of the identified problem. Often the ERIC system* is used to obtain this data. Existing evidence that reports what has been done to date regarding the identified problem adds significant strength to the proposal.

For example:

A. A national survey (such as a Gallup poll) has concluded that community members are willing and useful to teachers desiring volunteer assistance. The community members need to be carefully oriented to the school and to the role of the community member. Community members want to support the activities and responsibilities of the teacher.

B. A five-year follow-up study of the 11th- and 12th-grade students in a particular school system revealed the following information:

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*ERIC, the Educational Resources Information Center, is a national information system designed and supported by the National Institute of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Its purpose is to make available the results of exemplary programs as well as research and development efforts, and to provide information related to the development of more effective educational programs. Through a network of specialized centers or clearinghouses—each responsible for a particular educational area, current information is monitored, acquired, evaluated, abstracted, indexed, and listed in the ERIC system. The reference materials that are created as a result of these efforts are available on microfiche and often can be purchased in xeroxed form. By using ERIC's reference materials, any educator will have ready access to reports of innovative programs, conference proceedings, bibliographies, professional papers, curriculum-related materials, and reports of educational research and development. A university library should have an ERIC microfiche collection and an apparatus for viewing that also makes print-out copies.

11th- and 12th-Grade Students in XYZ School System

	Year				
	1	2	3	4	5
In college	45%	50%	47%	42%	45%
In 35-40 hour work week .	40	43	50	53	49
On welfare and/or unemployment	15	7	3	5	6

III. Measurable objectives of the proposal.

Objectives focus on the problem. The objectives indicate what the proposal intends to accomplish. Each objective needs to specify a specific portion of the proposal.

For example:

A. To interview [45] freshmen and make a determination with each of them of future career goals by a specific date, giving month and year.

B. To establish a procedure and have it accepted by the school board that will enable ideas for learning improvements to come from teachers, community members, school board members, and administrators that will be formally written and included in a plan for future improvement of the school and of the learning that takes place there.

C. To identify and document [35] community learning resources available for use in the curriculum.

D. Develop a concept paper that will explain how teachers can become more involved in curriculum decisions.

E. Identify professional reading needs in one school. Locate, purchase, and organize a professional library with books, articles, and nonprint materials.

IV. An explanation of the procedures and activities for successfully completing the identified objectives.

A paragraph-by-paragraph explanation of how each objective will be accomplished should be included in the proposal. The paragraphs should be written so that anyone could look at this part of the proposal and understand how the project will take place.

A second explanation to be completed should indicate times, tasks, and costs. This second explanation is sometimes called the management plan or plan of action in the guidelines or regulations provided by the funding source.

An example:

In-Service Staff Development

The project director would be released one-eighth (52 days) of her/his time to provide the leadership and coordination needed for accomplishing the project objectives. The project would be fully explained to all of the staff and an assessment of professional development needs would be made. These needs would be placed in priority order, documented, and distributed to all staff members.

An outline would be distributed to all staff members providing them with a means to submit professional development plans. The plans that are submitted would be reviewed by a local association panel and funded as based on the priority and availability of funds.

Funded projects for professional development would become a basis for implementing the objec-

tives of the proposal that relate to staff development.

Reports of funded projects and the outcomes from each project would be reported to the entire staff as well as to the community. Concrete evidence of staff improvements would be reported to the funding source as well as interested agencies and personnel.

This project will be evaluated as based on the extent that each objective is accomplished. Quarterly reports will be completed along with a final evaluation report.

V. Governance of project.

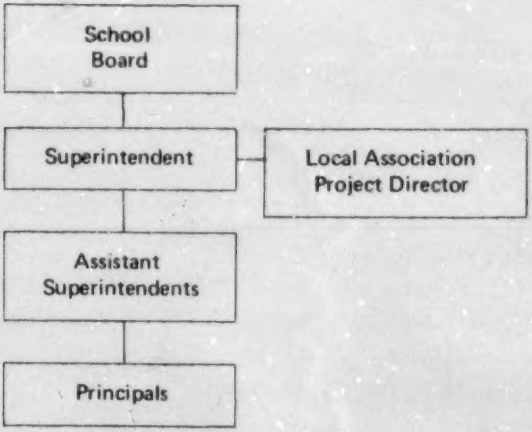
Each proposal needs to identify how the project will be administered. The job description of each person receiving funds from the project needs to be stated. An organizational chart of the school district indicating the relationship of the project with the local association needs to be also included in the proposal.

The proposal needs to explain the procedures for making budget decisions. A statement that explains the methods and procedures used for the accounting of the funds needs to be included in the proposal.

For example:

A. A project team of teachers serves as the planning committee and makes recommendations to the project director and the local association chairperson of instruction and professional development. The project director works within the approved policies of the district and implements the project keeping open lines of communication with the association officers, teachers, building principal(s), and district superintendent. Periodic progress reports will include copies to the administration and school board.

The organizational chart showing lines of communication and authority are as follows:

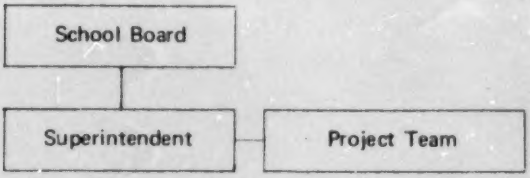


All funds will be accounted for using approved accounting procedures established by the National Education Association for local associations.

The indirect cost to the local association should be computed accurately.

B. This project will be administered by a team with the following membership: five teachers and three administrators. The decisions of the group will be made by consensus or majority vote.

The organizational chart showing the lines of communication and authority are:



The project will be administered in accord with the current policies and practices of the district. Funds will be accepted by the local school district and dispursed only upon written consent of the project team.

Accounting for all project funds will be made through the local school district accounting office and in accord with approved double-entry accounting practices.

The indirect cost for the district should be computed accurately.

For example: local associations should be independent of school boards and superintendents.

VI. Personnel involved in the project.

The project members by name, qualification, experience, and responsibilities need to be included in the proposal document. Usually a resume of each person involved in the project is sufficient. Statements relating to personnel should reflect equal opportunity for project staff, with minorities and women included in the project.

For example: Project director, teachers, administrators, community members, consultants, and evaluators.

VII. Facilities and equipment.

An explanation of the facilities and equipment items are included in the proposal. Usually equipment items are more readily accepted when they are leased with the intent of purchase.

For example: typewriter, calculator, environmental equipment, room rental, auto lease.

VIII. Budget

Current practices require a detailed breakdown of each amount included in the budget. The best practice is to relate each activity proposed in the project directly to a budget item.

For example:

Personnel Costs (percent of time on project, number of days for each person included in the project).

Professional Training (number of people included in the training, and an itemized listing of what is included in the training).

Materials (postage, telephone, paper, books, magazines, non-print).

Travel and lodging (cost per mile, lodging costs including the number of people and number of days for lodging).

Consultant Services (names and vita of each consultant, if possible. Amount and number of days for each consultant).

Evaluation and Reporting (number of days for evaluation, if an independent evaluation and its costs are included in final reports).

Equipment (include in the lease that the purchase agreement is dependent on the funding and continued funding of the proposal).

Dissemination (cost of providing a report of the project with distribution to interested groups).

Indirect Cost (an amount negotiated with the funding source for overhead items, such as depreciation of equipment, office space, lights, power, and services provided to membership).

IX. Abstract.

First determine whether the entire proposal will or will not be read. If not, then the abstract may be the

most important part of the proposal. The abstract should clearly state what the proposal will do and how it will be done. Abstracts are written after the proposal has been completed.

For example:

The parts of an abstract that make it a strong abstract are: (1) the need for the proposal, (2) the objectives, (3) the activities proposed, (4) the governance of the proposal, (5) the total budget requested with a general summary of how the requested resource will be used, and (6) evaluation and dissemination.

Example of an Abstract:

ABSTRACT

Need — A great deal of attention has been focused recently upon the need for improving our public school systems. Programs have been developed which have attempted to change teachers, administrators, and students within the public schools. Influence on these various educational sub-groups has been exerted at the pre-service and in-service level, and although many educators agree that in-service education is a good thing, there is much disagreement as to the specific nature or focus of those in-service education programs.

Objectives — In the proposal that follows, particular attention has been given to the need for well-defined in-service programs that will make improvements in the learning programs for students. The following objectives are included in the proposal:

1. Each teacher will plan and implement an in-service program that meets a particular need of the teacher or group of teachers.
2. In-service program results will be carefully evaluated and reported to the entire school staff in the district.

Activities

The activities to accomplish the objectives are based on the fact that teachers have differing in-service needs. A systematic process will be used by the teaching staff that provides for the development of individualized in-service programs. These programs will be documented and scheduled on a school-by-school basis so that some of the activities will be done on an individual basis and some activities will be completed on a group basis.

As each of the in-service programs are completed, a demonstration of the results will be provided through a variety of dissemination procedures and techniques. For example, video tapes will demonstrate some teaching skills, and open meetings will be held with community members to report and show in a classroom situation the results of the in-service efforts.

Governance

This project is governed by the local teacher association and implemented within the policies and regulations of the local school district. The project director is the local president and is directly responsible as project director to the district superintendent.

Budget

The total budget requested for the one-year project is $18,275. Funds required would cover personnel, materials, travel and lodging, evaluation and reporting, and indirect costs.

Evaluation and Dissemination	The project will be evaluated by a third-party evaluator and quarterly reports will be filed with the project director, superintendent, school board, and funding source. Dissemination efforts will be completed through condensed reports as projects are completed. A final dissemination report will be a document that is presented to interested groups in the district, as well as state and national organizations.

RATING THE PROPOSAL

Each proposal submitted is carefully read and rated according to criteria that is similar to what is listed in the governance form below. Usually readers are acquainted with the area under consideration for funding. A useful exercise for the local association is to have teachers who have not previously read the proposal to read it and then rate it. It is also useful to have a disinterested person read and rate the proposal. Each item below should be considered and weighted separately.

	Low		Med.		High	
	0	1	2	3	4	5
1. The objectives of the project are clearly stated and capable of being attained by the proposed procedures.						
2. The procedures for achieving the objectives are appropriate, technically sound, and spelled out in full detail.						
3. The proposal includes provisions for an adequate evaluation of the effectiveness of the project and for determining the extent to which the objectives are accomplished.						
4. The procedures of the project appear to be practical and feasible for rather wide application and are of sufficient scope and duration to make a significant contribution.						
5. Adequate plans are described for disseminating the results of the project.						
6. The project reflects identified needs.						
7. The person proposed as project director has a strong background in education and related experience.						
8. The facilities and equipment for carrying out the program are adequate.						
9. Proposed staff members for the project have the necessary skills and knowledge for the program.						
10. The budget is realistic and directly related to the procedures and activities.						
11. The estimated cost of the project is reasonable in relation to the anticipated results.						
12. The applicant organization is competent in the areas of bookkeeping and accounting.						
13. Governance of the project is clearly stated regarding budget decisions, communications, roles and responsibilites of project personal.						
Total	____		____		____	
Combined Total	_____					
Average Score	_____					
	(13 ÷ Combined Total)					

Continued on next page.

What your score means:

0 - 1 Re-conceptualize your proposal and start over.

2 - 3 Re-write.

4 Sharpen your proposal in the areas where the items received less than 5.

5 Rush to the post office!

POINTS TO REMEMBER

The following 13 points are included as information that is sometimes overlooked in the development and follow-through of the funding cycle. These points are suggestions for your consideration.

1. Obtain guidelines and regulations for writing the proposal. These may be obtained from the *Federal Register* for all federal proposals and from sources identified later in this document for foundations and state sources. The *Federal Register* may be found in many public and school libraries. Information about foundations may be obtained from The Foundation Center. See "Sources of Financial Support," pages 28-31, for further information.
2. Carefully check the use of grammar and punctuation. Excess wording is unnecessary in proposals. Proofread and rewrite rather than submit a sloppy document.
3. Have some disinterested person read the proposal and carefully consider the comments.
4. The proposal being developed should meet a high-priority need of the organization submitting the document as well as the funding agency.
5. Work with others who have had projects that were funded successfully. Develop, if possible, a relationship with the agency receiving the proposal. It is better to work through one person in the organization than through many different people in the same agency or program.
6. Seek as much information about the funding agency or organization as possible. Often one can learn what has been funded in the past from the annual reports and program officers of various foundations.
7. National conventions, institutes, and workshops are excellent places to get to know the program direc-

tors who provide requests and guidelines for future proposals.

8. Avoid involving personnel from the funding agency when you're developing the proposal. This usually involves a conflict of interest and could cause unnecessary problems.

9. If you have an idea and would like to see if there are programs addressing this idea, submit it to some agencies and organizations for their consideration. A letter of intent to apply for a specific program may be a good idea.

10. Keep a copy of the proposal. Supply the agency or organization receiving the proposal with the number of copies requested and in sufficient time. Send proposals by certified mail with a receipt requested or hand carry them to the designated address.

11. Take nothing for granted. You should receive a notice that your proposal has been accepted for consideration. Upon request, you may receive the rating of the readers with their comments. Spend no money for the project until the grant award or announcement has been received. The award or announcement is the first conclusive evidence that your proposal has been accepted.

12. Advice on the proposal can be obtained without cost from the state education department. Each state has federal program personnel that can be most helpful in proposal preparation for federal and private funding sources.

13. For results for federal funds, send a notice to the appropriate U.S. Representative or Senator. Their staff members can help you reach the necessary people.

EVALUATION AND REPORTING

The evaluation and reporting of a proposal that is already being implemented is essential when looking for future funding. Because the proposal is a contract between the local association and the funding agency, it is important to carry out the proposal as agreed to in the acceptance of the grant. If it becomes necessary to make changes in the carrying out of the proposal, it is best to bring the changes to the attention of the program officers of the funding agency before implementing the changes.

Evaluation of projects is becoming more and more important. In many cases independent, third-party evaluators are mentioned in the proposal guidelines. Evaluation will often be by the evaluator included in the project. The evaluation includes the extent to which the project objectives are carried out. An audit of funds expended for the project will also be made.

Evaluation has become a means for determining alterations in the project. In order for corrections to be made in the project, information has to be made available to decision-makers at the appropriate time. Evaluative data are used for future funding and making information available to funding agencies for establishing future funding priorities.

Reports are usually required quarterly although it depends on the size of the grant and the source of funds. The reports indicate evaluative data as well as the strengths and inhibiting factors of the project. A final report is required from 30 to 90 days following the completion of the project. Final reports contain statistical data as well as the impact from the completed project.

THE FUNDING CYCLE

The following chart shows the major activities that comprise the funding cycle. While there are minor activities within each of these major events, the chart will give the proposal writer an idea of the sequence that precedes the awarding of a grant.

1	Announcement of Program Requesting Proposals
2	Proposal Development Including the Completion of a Document that Meets the Guidelines
3	Finalizing the Proposal Including Appropriate Signatures and Assurances
4	Sending the Proposal or Hand Carrying It to the Designated Address on Time
5	Waiting for a Review by Readers with their Comments
6	If Accepted by the Readers and Program Officers the Possible Revisions in the Proposal with Budget Negotiations

7	Negotiated Budget
8	GRANT AWARD
9	Start Project
10	Submit Project Reports

SOURCES OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

General Sources of Information

Executive Office of the President. Office of Management and Budget. *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.* Annual. Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1975.

A comprehensive listing of all federally supported programs. The listing includes the title of the program, a brief summary of funding priorities and the amount of funds appropriated in the program and dates for proposal submission. This catalog may be located at public libraries, college and university libraries, state departments of education, and federal offices.

Office of the Federal Register. National Archives and Records Service, General Service Administration. *Federal Register.* Washington, D.C.: GPO, daily.

All federal programs are announced in the *Register.* Thirty days must expire after a program is announced before a closing date for proposal can expire. The guidelines for obtaining applications and guidelines for the programs as well as the information for submitting a proposal are included in the announcement. The *Register* may be used in public libraries, state education departments, university libraries, and the state teachers association.

Renetzky, Alvin, and others. *Annual Register of Grant Support.* Annual. Los Angeles: Academic Media, 1975. 378 pp.

A well-organized, well-indexed survey of current available grants. Grant support sources include government, foundations, business and professional organizations. Programs are categorized as general, humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Information includes organization, purpose, eligibility, financial data, and submission of proposal dates. Public libraries and state education departments are sources for this document.

The Foundation Center, compiler. *The Foundation Directory*. Edition 5. New York: Columbia University Press, 1975. 516 pp.

The *Directory* lists over 5,000 foundations by state. It is compiled by The Foundation Center, which is an independent agency that provides factual information about philanthropic foundations. There are two main centers: 888 7th Ave., New York, NY 10019 and 1001 Connecticut Ave., Washington, D.C. 20036. There are also more than 50 regional libraries located throughout the U.S. that are operated by the Foundation for research purposes.

Federal Sources for Funding Specific Areas

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
HEW Office of the Assistant Secretary
North Building, Room 4256
330 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Bureau of Community Health Services
Director, Division of Health Services
Health Services Administration, PHS
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20852

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
National Institute of Health
Westwood Building
Bethesda, MD 20014

Office of Child Development
PO Box 1182
Washington, DC 20013

Social and Rehabilitation Service
HEW South Building, Room 5412
330 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Department of Labor
Manpower Administration
U. S. Department of Labor
Washington, DC 20213

National Institute of Education
Proposal Clearinghouse
1200 Nineteenth Street, NW
Washington, DC 20208

Office of Youth Development
Donohoe Building, Room 1185
400 Sixth Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

Department of Agriculture
Federal Center Building No. 1
5425 Belcrest Road
Hyattsville, MD 20782

State Sources for Funding Proposals

Each state receives grants from the federal government. These grants have been received from proposals prepared at the state level. On July 1, 1975, Public Law 93-380 begins to take effect. This law may be obtained from the Congressional delegation or from program officers in the U.S. Office of Education. Regulations have been published in the *Federal Register* that explain the way that Public Law 93-380 will be implemented. In Fiscal Year 1976, 50 percent of the funds that were appropriated to separate categorical programs, e.g., Title I, Title II, Title III, will become part of a consolidation of these categorical programs.

In Fiscal Year 1977 all of the monies for categorical programs will become consolidated into Title IV, Public Law 93-380. With the changes in the new law, local associations as well as private non-profit organizations can apply for grants. You can obtain guidelines for application from your state department of education. Each state has federal program personnel who can assist in meeting the funding needs of the local school districts.

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